

## **MINUTES**

### **MONTANA SENATE 58th LEGISLATURE - REGULAR SESSION**

#### **FREE CONFERENCE COMMITTEE ON HOUSE BILL 13**

**Call to Order:** By **ACTING CHAIRMAN BILL TASH**, on April 26, 2003  
at 2 P.M., in Room 422 Capitol.

#### **ROLL CALL**

**Members Present:**

Sen. Bill Tash, Acting Chairman (R)  
Rep. Alan Olson, Vice Chairman (R)  
Rep. Christine Kaufmann (D)  
Rep. Debby Barrett (R)  
Sen. Mike Cooney (D)  
Sen. Corey Stapleton (R) (sub) for Sen. Zook, Chairman

**Members Excused:** Sen. Tom Zook (R)

**Members Absent:** None.

**Staff Present:** Judy Feland, Secretary

**Please Note.** These are summary minutes. Testimony and discussion are paraphrased and condensed.

**Committee Business Summary:**

Free Conference Committee on HB 13 - Adopted as Amended

**{Tape: 1; Side: A}**

#### **Free Conference Committee on HB 13**

**Discussion:**

**CHAIRMAN BILL TASH** told the committee that through the hard work done on HB 2, they'd received the good news that money could be used for the State Pay Plan. He presented **Amendment HB001304.alm EXHIBIT(frs89hb0013a01)** prepared by **Lois Menzies, Executive Director, Legislative Services Division.**

**Ms. Menzies** said the amendments would provide for a \$.25 per hour increase effective January 1, 2005 for the statewide matrix, teachers' matrix and also blue collar workers. It also increased the appropriation in the bill to cover that increase. She asked **John McEwen, Administrator, State Personnel Division, Department of Administration** to explain the appropriation. He said the increase from the original bill would be \$1.9 million, General Fund. The appropriation covered the \$.25 pay raise for all 16,000 plus FTE in the budget, which included Legislative Branch, Judicial Branch, and the University system as well as the Executive Branch.

**CHARMAN TASH** asked for clarification on the total, which was \$1.9 million, General Fund; \$4.7 million total funds. In further discussion about where the money came from, it was explained by **Taryn Purdy, Principal Fiscal Analyst, Legislative Fiscal Division**, that final action on HB 2 on the last vote taken took approximately a 2% vacancy savings that was not applied equally to every agency, which reduced the budget by about \$7.4 million. It equated to about 200 FTE though no FTE was taken from the budget.

**REPRESENTATIVE CHRISTINE KAUFMAN** asked if they saved \$7.4 million, but were spending \$1.9. **Ms. Purdy** said the actual amount saved in HB2 was about \$6 million. The balance was in the Ending Fund Balance.

**CHAIRMAN TASH** said he understood the Ending Fund Balance was about \$45 million. **SENATOR STAPLETON** reported that on the previous day, the balance totaled \$40.9, so the additional money would make it between \$45-46 million.

**SENATOR MIKE COONEY** said he was grateful for the work of the Finance Committee trying to figure out additional money for the Pay Plan. He despised using vacancy savings as a tool to accomplish this, but in these times, perhaps it was the only way. He supported the motion, but somewhat reluctantly.

**CHAIRMAN TASH** said it was a good point, but in these extraneous times, the important point is the Ending Fund Balance so they didn't have a Special Session.

**REPRESENTATIVE CHRISTINE KAUFMAN** asked if the motion were to fail, there would be more money in the Ending Fund Balance. The Chairman agreed with that assessment.

**REPRESENTATIVE ALAN OLSON** moved Amendment HB001304.alm.

**Discussion:**

**SENATOR STAPLETON** asked **Chuck Swysgood, Office of Budget Programming**, if he's seen the amendment. He had not seen the amendment, but confirmed the contents.

**Motion/Vote:** **REPRESENTATIVE ALAN OLSON** moved to adopt the Free Conference Committee Report. The motion carried unanimously. Senator Zook voted by written proxy.

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**ADJOURNMENT**

Adjournment: 2:30 P.M.

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SEN. BILL TASH, Chairman

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Judy Feland, Secretary

BT/jf

**EXHIBIT** (frs89hb0013aad)